

# COMMON GROUND



MAY—JUNE, 1951

VOLUME V—NUMBER 3

PRICE : THREEPENCE

# THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

## Objects :

To combat all forms of religious and racial intolerance. To promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews, and to foster co-operation in educational activities and in social and community service.

## Presidents :

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY  
HIS EMINENCE THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER  
THE RT. REV. THE MODERATOR OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND  
THE RT. REV. THE MODERATOR OF THE FREE CHURCH  
FEDERAL COUNCIL  
THE VERY REV. THE CHIEF RABBI

## Vice-Presidents :

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF READING  
THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF PERTH  
SIR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

## Hon. Treasurer :

SIR ROBERT WALEY COHEN, K.B.E.

## Joint Hon. Secretaries :

PERCY W. BARTLETT  
A. G. BROTMAN, B.Sc.

## Chairman of Executive Committee :

REV. HENRY CARTER, C.B.E.

## General Secretary :

REV. W. W. SIMPSON, M.A.

## Organising Secretary :

D. WALLACE BELL

## Education Officer :

A. I. POLACK

## Local Councils :

Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Chester,  
Hampstead, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool Manchester,  
Middlesbrough, Oxford, Southport, South Shields,  
Sunderland.

KINGSWAY CHAMBERS, 162A, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2

Telephone : TEMPLE BAR 9306-7-8

---

Cover Photograph: Summer in the English Lakes.

(Fox Photo)

# COMMON GROUND

VOLUME V NUMBER 3

MAY-JUNE, 1951

---

## MAIN CONTENTS

Our Religious Inheritance in Law	- - -	The Hon. Mr. Justice Vaisey
The Churches and Arab Refugees	- - -	William W. Simpson
Pentecost	- - -	Isaac Levy
Speaking with Tongues	- - -	Dewi Morgan
The Youth Club and Religion	- - -	Douglas Schofield

---

## Our Religious Inheritance in Law

THE HON. MR. JUSTICE VAISEY

*In no area of our civic life do we owe more to religious thought and tradition than in the development and administration of the law.*

THE association of Religion and Law in human thought and experience is very much closer than is often supposed. To say that the two are in any material respect opposed to one another is demonstrably false. The word "religion" itself, according to its probable derivation, signifies that which is binding and obligatory; so that a "religious" man is properly one who does what it is his duty to do rather than one who accords worship to the higher unseen power by whom, directly or indirectly, that duty is enjoined. God, the source of our being, and Lord of heaven and earth, is in one of the most important of his activities the "righteous judge, strong and patient" (Psalm vii, 12).

It is interesting to note that in the Greek mythology *Diké*, the personification of Justice, was a daughter of Zeus. She is represented as approaching her father's throne with lamentations whenever an act of injustice was perpetrated. She was the enemy of all falsehood, and the protectress of the wise administrators of the law. *Hesychia*, peace of mind, was her daughter, since it is only justice which produces a quiet conscience.

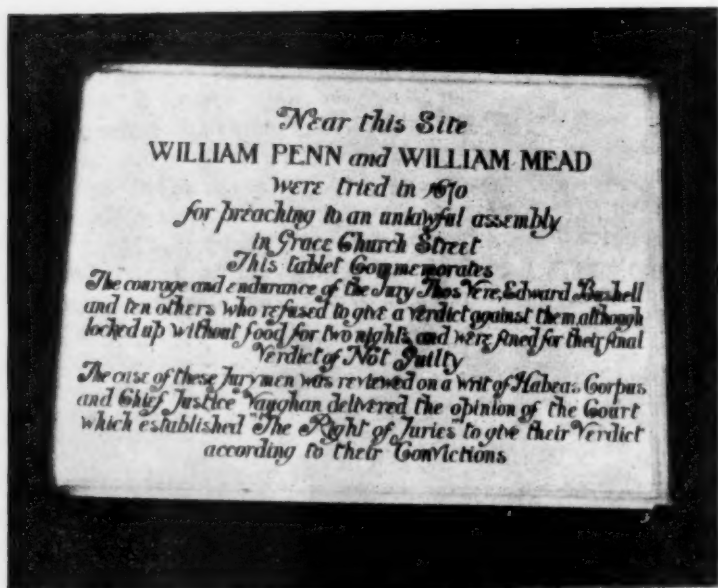
### Religion means worship and obedience

What do we mean by religion? In essence it is the recognition on man's part of an unseen power controlling his destiny, ordering his steps, and requiring from him reverence and obedience. Now obedience is a Christian virtue, not perhaps in these days willingly admitted as such. Yet it is a fundamental principle that all authority is ultimately derived from God as the supreme authority, as St. Peter insists in a familiar

passage: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (I Peter ii, 13). No theme is more frequent in the Hebrew Scriptures than the justice of God, which is regarded as one of the greatest of the divine attributes. Consider, for example, that great "acrostic" psalm, the 119th, in which mention is made in all but one of its 176 verses either of the law, or of the commandments or the statutes, or the judgments, or the testimonies, of God.

As in their journey through the wilderness the Israelites of old were under the joint leadership of Aaron the Priest who ordered and directed their worship, and of Moses the dispenser and arbiter of their laws, so in our own pilgrimage from this world to the next we are commanded both to worship and to obey. Religion and Law—each word being understood in its highest sense—are essentially complementary.

With so firm a conviction that the true law is the law of God, and so deep-rooted a fidelity to its rule as we find in the religion of Israel, it is not surprising that Christianity, which claims to be its flower and fulfilment, inculcates the supreme duty of obedience to that rule. For the Jew, no



A commemorative tablet in the entrance hall of the "Old Bailey" recalls a famous case in the struggle for religious liberty in this country.

(Photo: Dorian Leigh)

less than for the Christian, his religion involves submission, acquiescence, obedience. Each is essentially, and by conviction, law-abiding.

It is popular in certain quarters today to represent Christianity as a subversive and even anarchical religion, and similar imputations have been made against the religion of Israel. Even that greatest of all human songs of praise and exaltation, the "Magnificat," has been described as "more revolutionary than 'The Red Flag'." With that description of it I am in complete disagreement. The spirit which it breathes is rather in accord with those other words uttered by her to whom we owe it:—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word."

### **Obedience requires freedom**

In a slave state men act as they are compelled to act. Obedience is only possible when men are free—and free to disobey. It is difficult to exaggerate the depth of the instinct to obey in the hearts and minds of men who are free. And of the influences which religion exerts upon the law and its administration in this country perhaps the most powerful is due to its teaching that man is the child of God, each individual possessing in himself an infinite value, deserving protection for himself, entitled to rights and subject to duties of his own. Remote indeed from the religion of the Jew and of the Christian is the totalitarian conception of man as a being comparable to the occupant of an ant-hill or a bee-hive, or the utilitarian principles which regulate the management of the farm-yard or breeding stable. The true doctrine of man (as we hold it to be) permeates the whole of law as we comprehend it in this country.

### **Religion in English law**

How do we testify our adherence to these lofty conceptions of what "law" is? Imperfectly, no doubt, and inadequately, and yet the collective amount of such testimony is not inconsiderable. It cannot surely be doubted that the ancient Common Law of this country is infused by Christian principles, and is founded upon a just appreciation of the dignity of man as the child of God. Our statutes are enacted by legislative assemblies upon whose deliberations the divine blessing is invoked every day. The members of the legal profession, at the beginning of every legal year, in Westminster Abbey, make their corporate submission to the divine guidance, and dedicate themselves to the fulfilment of their delegated task of securing the ends of justice. Every Assize is opened by a solemn service of prayer. On the greater feast-days of the Church's year a special ceremonial dress is worn by the Judges in the King's Bench

Division of the High Court. Until the year 1881 the principal Courts of Law sat at Westminster under the shadow and protection of the Abbey, and a great opportunity was missed when in that year the new Law Courts in the Strand were opened without having among the thousand rooms of that great building any counterpart to the magnificent Sainte Chapelle which is the glory of the Law Courts of Paris. Then, every witness (save in the rare cases in which all belief in a Divine Being is disclaimed) invokes the name of God in protesting the truth of his testimony. Again, at the dreadful moment when a convicted murderer receives the sentence of death, he is solemnly recommended to the mercy of God. Lastly, the sign of the cross is still marked on the outer sheet of the completed "opinion" or draft as it is handed out from the chambers of Counsel.

### **Problem of punishment**

We come to the terribly difficult matter of punishment. How far do our theories and practice in that respect square with the principles of our religion? It is claimed that a notable advance has been made in this matter, largely owing to the improved knowledge which we now possess of the workings of the human mind. The nature of punishment, its effect and its aims, are subjects of controversy and of immense complexity, quite unsuited to any but the most cursory reference in a brief article such as the present. It is now agreed on all hands that the idea of vengeance should be almost, if not quite, excluded from every punitive measure. It is suggested that if the only issue lay between the judge and the guilty person anything in the nature of punishment would scarcely ever be justified—for how can it be known that the moment for repentance and a change of heart has not arrived? In the poignant lines of the ancient ballad:

*"Between the stirrup and the ground  
Mercy I sought, mercy I found."*

and how can a thoughtful mind fail to recall the words of the divine voice "Go, and sin no more" (St. John viii, 11).

But the difficulty is chiefly due to the existence of considerations other than those directly affecting the culprit himself. There is the need for publicly vindicating the supremacy of the law, and for stigmatising as blameworthy acts which are inhuman or antisocial, and for bringing home not only to the offender but to his associates and the community the culpability of his acts or omissions. The vagaries of human conduct must be discountenanced or checked. Though the reformation or cure of the individual wrong-doer is important for the benefit not only of

himself but of others, it is by no means the only, nor even the most important, of the purposes which punishment is designed to serve.

### Prayers for the magistrates

It is popularly supposed that there is at the present time a vital distinction between the rigidity of "Law" and the flexibility of "Equity"—but the difference today is almost entirely historic. Very beautifully phrased are the petitions in the Book of Common Prayer which relate to the Law and its administration. In the Litany, God is asked

*" . . . to bless and keep the Magistrates, giving them grace to execute justice and maintain truth "*

where, of course, the word "Magistrates" stands for the whole judiciary. In a prayer in the office of Holy Communion we ask that all in authority

*" . . . may truly and indifferently minister justice to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and the maintenance of true religion and virtue."*

"Indifferently"—a magnificent word with a notable significance, and of far wider import than the word "impartially" which is sometimes, without any sufficient warrant, substituted for it. It reminds us that a judge should not be merely impartial—that is to say "favouring" neither side in a dispute—but should ignore utterly everything that is irrelevant, laying aside all personal predilections and prejudices, and disregarding all personal consequences which may befall himself—unpopularity, misunderstanding, blame, or, on the other hand, self-gratification, promotion, praise.

If the administration of law is in truth an activity of the highest importance, and if obedience to the law is indeed an obligation of the highest sort, these are ideals only to be fully attained in a community where sound religious principles are held, and where the law is so made as to regulate the actions of free men accepting, however inarticulately, standards of spiritual and practical life laid down for them by God for his purposes, and not for themselves by themselves and for what they suppose to be their own advantage.

## The Churches and Arab Refugees

WILLIAM W. SIMPSON

"**I**F there is no result to your deliberations we shall consider you as people who came to see a show." With those words the spokesman of the 2,600 Arab refugees living in a military barracks at Baalbeck, Lebanon, bade us farewell. There was both rebuke and challenge in

what he said. There had been many previous groups of visitors, but so far as the refugees themselves were concerned there had been nothing to show for their visits. And now we had come, representatives not of this or that political or intergovernmental agency, but of the Churches. "If you fail to solve the problem," he said, "you are responsible before God."

"We" were a group of delegates to a conference held in Beirut from May 1st to 8th under the joint auspices of the World Council of Churches, the International Missionary Council and the Near East Christian Council. The Roman Catholic Church was represented by a Franciscan monk who attended as an observer on behalf of the Pontifical Mission which is doing extensive work among the refugees.

We had spent three days visiting camps at Tripoli, Tyre and Sidon, and, on the third day, at Anjar and Baalbeck. A second party of delegates had visited camps at Amman, Jericho and in the Jerusalem area.

We were under no illusions as to the possibility of our being able to "solve the problem." That was hardly the purpose of the conference! But we were deeply conscious of our responsibility before God and man to do all in our power to understand something of its ramifications and difficulties and, by seeking to arouse the Christian conscience and to stimulate action on the part of governments and inter-governmental agencies, to make at least some contribution towards its solution.

### **Urgency of problem**

For the problem is one of very great urgency. For three years now groups of people totalling in all somewhere about three-quarters of a million have lived, many of them in appalling conditions, without any clue as to what their future is likely to be. Some, it is true, have managed to re-establish themselves in the countries to which they fled in the first place, but they are a very small minority, drawn from the educated and originally more prosperous sections of the Palestine Arab community.

Others, of the poorer peasant class, are living in conditions not very dissimilar from those in which they previously lived in Palestine, the only difference being that they have lost all their independence and the hope of employment. But a very large number are living under material conditions completely different from anything they have known before and under a sense of mental and spiritual frustration which cannot but have the most serious effects on their general morale. The remarkable thing is that the deterioration has not been greater. To that fact those who have worked in close touch with the refugees pay impressive tribute.

But there is no ground for complacency. The situation is very serious indeed, from the point of view both of the refugees themselves





*Arab refugees living in tents supplied by the United Nations. Many of these refugees had previously been camping on the ground under trees.*

*(Photo: United Nations)*

and of the peace of the whole of the Near East, and in particular of the State of Israel. It is one thing to read or to hear that there are strong and deep-rooted feelings of bitterness and hatred. It is another thing to be faced with them. The United States, Great Britain, and the United Nations are everywhere held to be the villains of the piece. Israel is scarcely mentioned, and when it is, only in such evasive phrases as "the other side," "the others" or "what is now known as Israel."

#### **Repatriation or resettlement?**

The refugees themselves are interested in one solution only—repatriation, at the price of fighting for it if necessary. Even the children are being brought up in an attitude of hostility and hatred towards Israel. In one camp school we heard the senior class sing a song—the Palestine song—which was afterwards interpreted to us as a song expressing their determination to go back to Palestine at all costs. "Cannon-fodder for

the future—that is the way they are growing up to think of themselves,” said the Director who was showing us round.

A tragic and dangerous situation indeed. And yet, ten minutes after that particular incident, the same Director, a Christian lawyer, was saying to a small group of us: “If only you will give me compensation and the chance of really getting established somewhere else I gladly take it and be prepared to forget the past.” And he claimed that he had assets worth half a million sterling frozen in Israel.

Inconsistent? Yes, of course! But it is not for us to stand in judgment over them. For three years the United Nations and the voluntary relief agencies have done their best to keep up a minimum supply of rations, to maintain a minimum health-service, and to supply a bare minimum of living accommodation and clothing. But very little indeed, nothing commensurate with the need, has been done in the way of rehabilitation or even preparation for resettlement. To say this is in no way to reflect on the devotion of those who have been trying to handle the situation on the spot. But they have been working under terrible handicaps, chief among which are the unwillingness of the Arab Governments to agree to a peace settlement with Israel, and the apparent indifference of the rest of the world.

#### **Findings of the conference**

Against this background, what could a conference of religious leaders hope to achieve? To that question the statement issued by the conference at the end of its discussions contains the nearest we are likely to get to an answer.

It was not a political conference. It did not attempt to deal with political issues as such. Nevertheless it would have been completely unrealistic to ignore, for example, the fact that “responsibility for the present situation must be shared by many nations and political groups.” Christians, also, in so far as “by their action or inaction they have failed to influence in the right direction the policy and decisions of their Governments and of the United Nations, are guilty too.”

It would have been equally short-sighted to ignore the fact that “there can be no permanent solution of the problems of the Palestinian refugees until there is a settlement of the outstanding political differences between the Arab States and Israel” and that the Churches must use what influence they can with their respective Governments in helping to bring about such a settlement which, the statement declared, “will have to contain provisions for the return of a certain number of refugees.”

"It must also include," the statement added, "a general plan of compensation for refugees whether they return or not."

But the conference was also realistic enough to recognise "after a careful appraisal of the situation as it exists at present," that while all refugees anywhere have a basic right to their homes and properties, "many Palestine refugees will have to settle in new homes."

It is undoubtedly true that "the greater proportion of the Palestine refugees are the victims of a catastrophe for which they themselves are not responsible." "A deep injustice has indeed been inflicted upon them," but it is also true that "nowhere in the world today can the claims of absolute justice be enforced, and that only the healing hand of time and the exercise of a spirit of forgiveness can release those forces which will make for peace, mutual understanding and reconciliation."

#### **A problem that concerns us all**

To this task we in the Council of Christians and Jews, together with all men of goodwill in this and other countries, need to apply ourselves with renewed energy and devotion. My own concern about the plight of refugees began with the tragedy of the Nazi persecution of Jews and non-Aryan Christians in Germany and Central Europe. It has been kept alive by the post-war problems of refugees and displaced persons in Europe as well as by other larger problems of which I have only read and heard. And now, as I have met these Arab refugees and seen and felt the same sense of frustration and despair tinged with resentment and bitterness, I feel that in some respects the wheel has turned almost full circle.

That feeling is strengthened by the news that greeted me on my arrival in Israel both of the tragic plight of Jews arriving destitute from Iraq and of the disposal of Jewish assets by the Custodian of Enemy Property in Iraq. There is a madness abroad in the affairs of men: there are deep-rooted and far-reaching hatreds which, however understandable from some points of view, must in the long run prove disastrous for mankind as a whole. Surely there must be some way in which those who believe in the Fatherhood of God and who profess acceptance of its corollary in the Brotherhood of man can cut across this vicious circle of human suffering and despair.

Those who took part in this conference left with the feeling that though much had been accomplished—more perhaps than at one stage they had dared to think possible—much more remains to be done in the follow-up. And to that they will unstintingly apply themselves in the months that lie ahead.

## Pentecost

ISAAC LEVY

*Owing to the variations of the Christian and Jewish calendars, Whitsun and Pentecost are this year separated by four weeks, Pentecost falling on June 10th.*

THE Festival of Pentecost, like all the great occasions in the Jewish calendar, reveals the perfect synthesis of religious tradition and historical-geographical attachment.

It occurs on the 6th and 7th of the month of Sivan (the third month) 50 days after the first day of Passover. It is, in fact, the fulfilment of the Passover. For the latter festival which commemorates the exodus from bondage is spiritually linked with this occasion which marks the Revelation at Sinai. Without the Torah the Exodus and the gift of nationhood would have had little meaning. For the purpose of Israel's redemption was that they should accept the Torah and in time reveal its contents to the rest of mankind. Pentecost is therefore affectionately called "The season of the giving of our Law."

The selected reading from the Pentateuch on this festival is naturally Exodus XIX and XX, which clearly refers to the giving of the Ten Commandments "in the third month after the children of Israel went forth from Egypt." Jews with a mystical bent of mind even re-enact the Biblical commandment given at Sinai to be "ready for the third day" by indulging in mental reparation for the "reception of the Torah." They maintain a vigil throughout the night prior to the festival and pass the hours in reciting selected passages from the Pentateuch, prophets, Hagiograph and the Zohar (the famous book of Jewish mysticism).

Like its two companion festivals, Passover and Tabernacles, Pentecost was once an occasion for joyful pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. In recalling the manner of the original celebration the Jew thinks still of the centre of his religious inspiration. The exile from that land which is so closely connected with his faith and religious consciousness, has not caused his memory of "the homeland" to fade. The festivals re-awaken his sense of attachment to and his awareness of his history. The special festival prayers recited on this day make specific reference to the pilgrimages which once took place. Although there is little likelihood that a Temple will ever be restored the Jew still celebrates the "joy of Jerusalem" which is an integral part of his historic consciousness.

### Feast of the harvest

The geographical attachment which Pentecost displays is of an unique character. The Bible refers to the festival as the "feast of the harvest" or



the "day of the first fruits." This aspect of the occasion is commemorated by decorating the Synagogues with an abundance of flowers. Although for centuries the Jew was prevented from leading an agricultural life, the memory of the harvest as once celebrated still lingers. The Jewish calendar is intimately connected with the seasons as they are fixed in the land of Israel. Israel's harvest, therefore, becomes the harvest season for the whole Jewish world irrespective of the climatic conditions in which Jews may live.

With the return of a large section of Jewry to their ancient homeland the agricultural aspect of Pentecost has been restored. It is once again celebrated as a religious and nature festival. In addition to the gift of the harvest being gratefully acknowledged the ancient ceremony of the first fruits has been revived. The Mishna records the festive manner in which these fruits were brought to the Temple. From all parts of the country

the produce was carried in gaily decorated baskets. On arrival in Jerusalem the elders of the city went forth to greet the pilgrims and accompany them to the Temple. In modern Israel a similar, though modified, ceremony is enacted. The children of the villages bring the produce of the settlements to Jerusalem and there they present it ceremoniously to the representatives of the state as their symbolic contribution to the upbuilding of the homeland and as an indication of the restoration of the soil to full production. The occasion is a festive one and reflects the new link which has been created between Israel and its historic land.

It will thus be seen that Pentecost combines within its varied forms of celebration all those elements which contribute to a healthy approach to religion. It is basically a *religious* festival for its central feature is the renewal of allegiance to divine Law; it is *historical* for it records the attachment of a people to the source of its life; it is *natural* for it reaffirms the appreciation of the fact that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

## Speaking with Tongues

DEWI MORGAN

*The Christian Pentecost, or Whitsuntide, commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Disciples on the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are told that there were startling manifestations of wind and fire (symbols of the Spirit of God) and there was a strange phenomenon "of speaking with tongues."*

"... and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

"For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."

Those two quotations refer to quite different moments in time. The first comes from the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The second comes from the same book, eight chapters later. On both occasions the text makes it obvious that the reaction of the hearers was utter astonishment.

Such astonishment is well depicted in Titian's picture which is reproduced opposite. There are details of that picture which are purely symbolical and not intended to be a photographic copy of the original scene. But the astonishment is certainly there. In fact it reaches the intensity of the description given in the second chapter of the Acts: "they were confounded."

There is surely more than a little significance about the unexpectedness of what happened when the day of Pentecost had fully come. It was neither wish-fulfilment nor auto-suggestion. In that sudden moment

they were not even able to relate it to the promise of Jesus: "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you." It is no exaggeration to say that the world has still not fully realised all the implications of that moment of history. For it was a Divine reversal of judgment passed on man.

It was many generations before that the sons of Noah had reached Shinar, and had found it a pleasant place, and had gradually developed



*THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, by Titian.*

*(Photo: Mansell)*



their arts and their crafts. They had become so clever, in fact, that they thought they could do anything. How unoriginal is this generation which believes that its science can conquer the world!

#### **Divisions are made by man**

These sons of Noah had decided to show their superiority. They would build a tower which would reach unto heaven. They would be equal with God. But God is not mocked. "Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth."

Whether you accept that story literally or not, its meaning is quite inescapable. It is man's self-aggrandisement which has created the factions which rend the earth asunder.

But divisions are not the plan of the God who is himself One. Before the curse of Babel, "the whole earth was of one speech and one language." Christians cannot claim that this is literally true again after the gift of the Spirit. But they do most sincerely believe that its final truth is thereby guaranteed. They do believe with the Psalmist that God's saving health shall be known among all nations.

And they also believe that the same church which received its Baptism on the day of Pentecost is the instrument by which that final blessing shall come. It is the Spirit which gives life to the Church, as indeed it was the Spirit which moved upon the face of the waters and brought forth life at the beginning of things.

#### **Idea of the Life-giving Spirit**

It is that Spirit which not only gives life in its human form but also gives Life in its highest form. For he is not only the Creator-Spirit but also the Sanctifier. It is he who makes holy, sets apart as belonging to God. It is he who releases human life from the cabinning and confining which is the outcome of sin and raises it to the freedom which is the paradoxical result of being indissolubly bound to God.

Throughout the Christian's Bible and their forms of worship this idea of Life-giving Spirit continually appears. That is perhaps one of the reasons why the wind is so often the metaphor. It is the wind which gives life to our scenery. A dead, still day when no clouds move and no leaf trembles can appear only in a theatre back-cloth. It is the wind which bloweth where it listeth and giveth life.

And this wind constantly bloweth *where it listeth*. It does so because its sphere is the whole world. "My Name shall be known among all nations" is the ringing promise—and challenge—which sounds from the



speaking with tongues which was the human response to the tongues of fire depicted by Titian. The act of evangelism is not merely a part of Christianity. It is not even of the *hene esse*. It is the *esse* itself.

### Christian's hope and belief

As one thinks of Whitsun in the middle of this war-weary, frustrated twentieth century there is one thing which becomes more and more important because it becomes more and more a fact of history. This Christian Church which began with the speaking of tongues is a world-wide force. The speaking with tongues is realised in a body where every man hears the message in his own tongue. Evil powers may attempt to conquer. But the Christian believes that the final outcome is as inevitable as the original source of life is unassailable.

The most startling material progress can do nothing to save the soul of humanity. The highest ethical system, in itself, can do little more. Even the materialist realises this dimly as he gives another despairing tug at his own bootlaces. It is only God himself who can re-create the humanity he created.

"Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the hand-maids in those days will I pour out my Spirit," said the prophet Joel. And a few verses later "... and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered."

Such is the Christian's hope as well as his belief.

## The Youth Club and Religion

DOUGLAS SCHOFIELD

*Religion has little place in the lives of most young people today. It is common ground to Christians and Jews to consider whether Youth Clubs can exert a religious influence, and an experienced youth worker here examines some of the problems involved.*

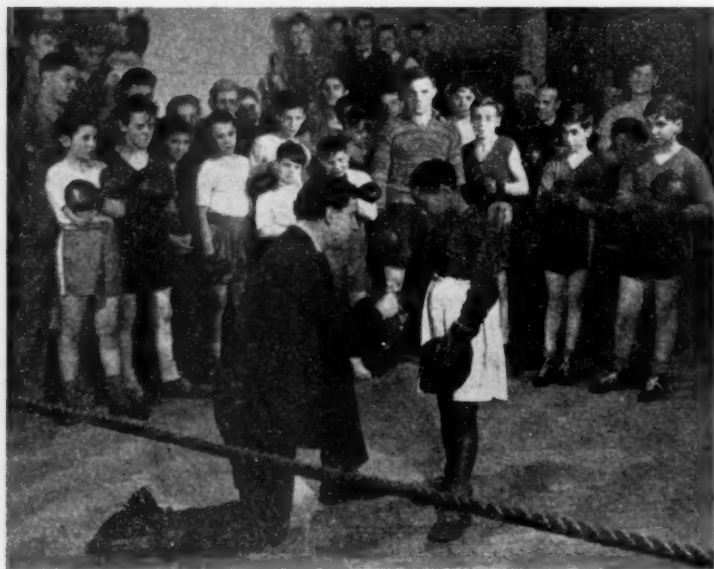
**T**OM SNOOKS is the product of the age in which he lives. His outlook, his interests, and his general attitude towards life, are all coloured by the circumstances and conditions of his day.

Beset in his home upbringing, in his work, and often even in his play, by an outlook of gross materialism and self-seeking—by the oft-applauded machinations of mother to obtain a bit of extra ration "on the quiet," by the attitude of father towards his political affiliations through which alone he sees salvation for himself and his own, by his elder brother's assiduously learning the latest and most frightful "arts"

of war, by the idol of his favourite sport being transferred from old loyalties to a rival club at an enormous fee—is it to be wondered at that Tom Snooks, in his short experience of life, has had little opportunity of being introduced to the love of God or of learning to recognise his handiwork? Is it to be wondered at if Tom thinks that, if there be a God, his interest can hardly be of such consequence as the interest taken in him by Messrs. Luxury Traders, Ltd., who, short of juvenile labour, are prepared to offer him an exceptionally large, if unjustifiable wage in order to procure his attachment; while the interest which the State takes in him is constant, if not always benign!

#### **The influence of the club**

There are thousands of Tom Snookses in youth clubs all over the country. And it is in his club that Tom finds an interest which constantly strives and often succeeds in counteracting the influences to which he is subjected elsewhere. His club means a great deal to Tom, for it is interested in him for his own sake. Here he finds friendship and understanding, recreation and wholesome activity; he is introduced to new,



*Boxing is one of the favourite sports at many boys' clubs.*

*(Photo: Central Office of Information)*

or undiscovered interests; he learns the art and the difficulties of self-government; he learns to shoulder responsibility, to accept duties as well as to expect rights. Above all there is an insistence on standards of behaviour and of thought which, however much they are at variance with those that prevail outside, within the club are clear and unassailable.

What of God? What of religion? Does his club do anything for him there? It certainly has little to work on, and it would be expecting much of any organisation to be required, in the face of adverse upbringing and prevailing attitudes, to succeed where home, school, and church have failed. In most non-sectarian clubs, therefore, the religious influence is, not unnaturally, weak. Whether in the strictly denominational clubs things may be otherwise is an open question—but the Tom Snookses are rarely attracted to the strictly denominational club.

### **Difficulty of maintaining high standards**

But in recognising this weakness in many clubs, let it at least be acknowledged how heavy is their task even to maintain high ethical and moral standards in the face of all the adverse influences that are constantly at war with them. Perhaps only if these clubs suddenly ceased to exist would it be fully realised how great has been their contribution to the maintenance of the decencies of outlook and of living among the nation's youth. Nevertheless the question must arise as to how long it is possible to preserve these standards without religion, the measuring rod of spiritual depth and height against which the true and lasting values of ethical and moral standards can alone be judged.

The leaders of the club movement are fully alive to this question. "The Place of Religion in Clubs" is a subject of many conferences and of most leaders' training courses. Many youth organisations have appointed qualified religious directors whose sole task is to promote the specifically religious side of their movement's work.

### **"Plugging" religion?**

Are these efforts producing results? It is yet too early to say, though one may have doubts as to whether, in any case, the results are commensurate with the time, money and thought expended. Certain methods must, by their very nature, fail. One conference speaker called his subject "Plugging Religion" and one fears there is too much deliberate "plugging" about some of the means and methods being employed. Nor will some of the exhortation to club leaders to which I have listened prove effective. Words burning with religious zeal, delivered with almost fanatical fervour, and often accompanied by accusations of

leaders having "failed the boy," are not going to help: they cannot but lead to a feeling of unworthiness and personal inadequacy on the part of a great many leaders who, except for their religious and personal shortcomings, are nevertheless doing some invaluable pieces of God's work in their own way.

Nor do I consider that most of the ideas and suggestions for an indirect approach, put forward by directors of religion, are likely to achieve much. Fireside chats, quizzes, specially designed games, questioning posters and the like may be of some use, and cannot be neglected, but how far they do in fact create a real concern for religion is problematical.

Club prayers, camp services, and festival gatherings also all have their value and importance, but, when everything is said and done, surely the religious side of club work should not have to be superimposed on the club—it should, so to speak, be taken in the general stride of the club's activity and life.

This brings me to what seems to me to be the most disastrous of all approaches: the insistence that religious precept and observance shall be all or nothing. This is the attitude of many religious authorities, in spite of their own failure with all the Tom Snookses up to the age of fourteen, from which failure both the clubs and Tom himself now suffer. But the religious authority, or the individual, who will not have things "diluted," has probably proved a greater handicap to religious efforts in clubs than any other single factor. They themselves have failed to give Tom anything: now they are vehement that the club should give him all. So far as they are concerned, to give him at least something just will not do.

### **Need for leaders**

I have not attempted to suggest ways and means of dealing with this question. It is obviously one bristling with difficulties, and beset by innumerable internal and external hazards. There is no royal road to success, and one may doubt whether one can hope for a great deal until the outlook of the world outside changes. I have merely stated the position so far as youth clubs are concerned, as it seems to me to exist in these times. There is little doubt that much more could be done if more men and women capable of influencing young people, and themselves possessed of wide religious understanding and tolerant views, could be encouraged to lend a hand in general club work. Not every leader has this qualification and ability, and as in the case of sex instruction, unless religion is "put across" in the right way by the right person, more harm than good may result.

## The Great Synagogue

WILLIAM W. SIMPSON

*The Great Synagogue, Duke's Place, Aldgate, celebrated its 250th anniversary in 1940, and was destroyed in an air raid in 1941. Its history is recorded in a book by Cecil Roth.*

WHAT is a synagogue? A place or a community? A building or an institution? The answer, of course, is both, for although in current usage the word invariably suggests a place specially built or adapted for Jewish worship it originally meant a meeting or assembly, a coming together of people. In fact, a congregation, the indispensable prerequisite of any building. For neither Christian nor Jewish places of worship are produced by spontaneous generation !

The story of "the Great," as the parent synagogue of the Ashkenazi\* Jewish community in this country is affectionately called, is therefore the story not merely of a building but of the people who laid its foundations, who enlarged and reconstructed it to meet the increasing demands of successive generations, and who preserved and enriched it until, on the night of May 11th 1941, it was reduced to a tragic heap of rubble by a German air-raid over London.

That was just after the 250th anniversary of its foundation, in celebration of which memorable occasion Cecil Roth had written *A History of the Great Synagogue, London, 1690-1940*. A further ten years were to pass before the story could be published. Now that it is available, how grateful we should be not only to its author for another fascinating chapter of Anglo-Jewish history but also to the present Senior Warden of the Synagogue, Dr. Israel Feldman, who has sponsored the publication as a tribute to the memory of his parents.

There is a particular appropriateness about this dedication for the volume is an eloquent tribute to the memory of several generations of Jews whose devotion to the welfare of their community and to its religious observances found expression in all the multifarious life and activities of the Great Synagogue. It is a story in which the non-Jewish as well as the Jewish reader will find much to interest and enlighten him.

### The Synagogue founded

Although the earliest records of the congregation itself are lost, such evidence as is available from other sources suggests that the first congregation of Ashkenazi Jews in this country was established in 1690.

---

\*Ashkenazi Jews are those of German or Eastern European origin. The earliest Jewish community to be established in this country after the resettlement of Jews in Britain during the time of Oliver Cromwell was of Sephardic or Spanish and Portuguese origin. The story of the beginnings of that community was told in an article in the May/June, 1950 issue of "Common Ground."

It seems clear also that the first Ashkenazi synagogue was founded in the same year on part of the site which was later to be occupied by the Great Synagogue itself in Duke's Place, Aldgate.

It was an interesting site, not without a certain symbolic character! For there, fifteen centuries before, had stood one of the bastions of the old city wall built by the Romans. And there too, in Medieval times, had stood the Priory of the Holy Trinity. It was indeed on part of the site of the Conventual Church itself that the Synagogue was actually built, though the monastery buildings had disappeared long enough before the foundations of the Synagogue were laid.

The site had been given by Henry VIII at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries to his Chancellor, Thomas Audley, who in turn passed it on to his daughter Margaret. When Margaret subsequently married the Duke of Norfolk the property became in fact what part of it has remained, in name until this day—Duke's Place.

#### **Contacts with Christian community**

With its roots thus deep-embedded in the traditions of a Christian past it is fitting that the subsequent relations of the Synagogue with the Christian present should have been friendly and happy. Dr. Roth has made no attempt to single out this particular aspect of the story. He has wisely left the reader to do that for himself, but he has given him plenty of material to work on.

Thus, for example, when early in the eighteenth century "The Minister and Church Wardens and other inhabitants of the Parish of St. Katherine Coleman, London" solemnly protested to the "Lord Mayor and the Worshipfull the Court of Aldermen" against the building of a "New Jews' Synagogue in Magpye Alley in Fenchurch Street" it was not so much an unfriendly act against Jews, as a gesture in support of a protest already launched by "the Congregation of German Jews in London" who were anxious to prevent a secessionist group from building a rival Synagogue.

Of more positive significance perhaps is the comment of Charles Wesley who, visiting the Synagogue a year or two after its reconstruction in 1766, wrote: "The place itself is so solemn that it might strike an awe upon those who have any thought of God." That was perhaps the occasion on which he was accompanied by another Methodist preacher, Thomas Olivers, who was so impressed by the singing of the *Yigdal* that he afterwards adapted the melody for his hymn "The God of Abraham praise." That melody which now appears in the hymn books of almost all the Churches still goes by the name of the famous *Hazan*, Leoni, from

whom Thomas Olivers obtained it after the service. Incidentally, in the latest edition of the Methodist Hymn Book published in 1933 the tune is set not only to Thomas Oliver's hymn "The God of Abraham praise" but also to a paraphrase of the *Yigdal* itself.

Other instances of friendly contact between Jews and Christians, too numerous even to catalogue here, include the visit of the Dukes of



INTERIOR OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE, 19th CENTURY.

Illustration taken from "The History of the Great Synagogue."



Cumberland, Sussex and Cambridge to a Sabbath evening Service on April 14th 1809, and the attendance of the Lord Mayor of London in 1812 at a marriage celebration held under the auspices of the Synagogue in the London Tavern. At this function over which according to the *Morning Post* "he presided with that affability and dignity which distinguished him upon all occasions . . . His Lordship expressed great delight at finding himself at the head of so numerous a party of Jews and Christians met together upon so happy an occasion."

### **Internal problems**

But the purely domestic story of the congregation itself and of the extraordinary range of problems confronting it at various stages of its life is of quite absorbing interest for the non-Jew no less than for the Jew.

There is, for example, the story of the way in which the early fear of rival congregations (a fear inspired chiefly by economic considerations) gave way, in face of the gradual migration of Jews from the East End, to the acceptance of the need for branch synagogues, and how the establishment of these local congregations led eventually to the passing in July 1870, of an Act of Parliament "confirming a scheme of the Charity Commissioners for the Jewish United Synagogues."

There is, too, the story of the various agitations for reform which reached a climax in 1839 with demands for the abbreviation of the liturgy, a more convenient hour of service, sermons in English, the introduction of a choir and the abolition of observance of the second days of certain major religious festivals. Although various adjustments in certain of these directions were made in course of time, the refusal to countenance them at that time led to the establishment in April 1840 of the new Reform Congregation of British Jews. Incidentally, Dr. Roth's comment that "a little more patience, a little more imagination, and the schism would have been unnecessary" is of much wider application than to this particular episode in the life of the Great Synagogue.

### **The Chief Rabbinate**

The Chief Rabbinate is another of the outstanding contributions of this historic Synagogue not to the Anglo-Jewish community only but to Jewry throughout the world. The first of the Rabbis of the Great Synagogue to be recognised as Chief, even though the office of Chief Rabbi had as yet no juridical existence, was "Dr." Solomon Hirschell who came to London to take up his appointment in 1802 and of whom it is recorded, interestingly enough by a non-Jewish writer, that "his sermons frequently dwelt on the duties of universal toleration."



Charity, one of the three pillars on which, according to Rabbinic tradition, the world rests, has always been an outstanding characteristic of the Great Synagogue which as early as 1815 already had some thirty charitable societies operating under its aegis. By the middle of the century some co-ordination was essential and in May 1859 the Jewish Board of Guardians, a pioneer and model for all charitable organisations, was brought into being. And over and above the support of communal charities were the contributions to non-Jewish charities of many kinds.

And so we might go on! But the purpose of the article is to refer the reader to the volume itself and to the study of the living institutions to which the Cathedral Synagogue of Anglo-Jewry gave birth during the first two hundred and fifty years of its existence. The building itself is gone. To that fact one of the illustrations—a drawing by Captain Bulkeley-Johnson—bears eloquent and moving testimony. Whether it will eventually be rebuilt on its present or some other site, is still uncertain.

One thing, however, is certain. The force which destroyed the material fabric could not shake its spiritual foundations which are embedded deep in the hearts of those who held "the Great" in such affection and whose lives are devoted to the pursuit of the ideals it existed to proclaim.

One last word of appreciation must be added—to the publishers, Edward Goldston & Son, who have produced a volume which it is a pleasure to handle and to read and which contains so many interesting illustrations so well reproduced.

## Report on Leeds

THE third and last of the winter's "week-end campaigns" of local Councils of Christians and Jews took place in Leeds from April 26th to May 1st. As previously in Cardiff and Manchester, the week-end culminated in a special meeting: a public forum on Human Rights, with the Bishop of Hull, Canon T. Fitzgerald, Dr. F. Hildebrandt, and Mr. Neville Laski, K.C., as speakers. The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Alderman F. O'Donnell, J.P., presided.

Earlier meetings and discussions had been held with social workers, teachers, Sunday School teachers, and University students. In addition, the Council's speakers had been invited to address the Leeds Rotary Club, the B'nai B'rith Luncheon Club, and a Sunday afternoon men's meeting at Salem Chapel. A "Trio" of speakers also visited the young people's fellowship of an Anglican Church, and had a most stimulating and invigorating discussion.

Following these various meetings it is hoped that much can be done by the Leeds Council of Christians and Jews to strengthen understanding and respect between the different communities. As elsewhere, in Leeds one found a certain amount of vague prejudice, based largely on misunderstanding and ignorance, that was somewhat disturbing. One found also a degree of "separateness" of the Jewish and Christian communities—and this in a city that has a higher proportion of Jewish citizens than any other town in England. On the other hand there was evident desire on all sides for more meeting-points on common ground, and there were many reports of the excellent relations that exist where members of different groups do meet together in friendly personal contact or in community service.

These three week-ends, in Cardiff, Manchester and Leeds, have well justified the effort that was put into them by our local Councils of Christians and Jews, and they will, we trust, lead to a permanent strengthening of our efforts in these centres. We look forward now to renewed ventures in them in the future, and to other such week-ends in new centres during next winter.

## Commentary

### ● Moral Authority

An interesting forum on Authoritative Moral Training took place recently under the auspices of the Central Churches Group of the National Council of Social Service. It was called to consider "What is the kind of authority that is required for parents in the new situation? Why has the old type of parental authority broken down?"

The discussion was remarkable for the wide variety of opinion expressed. The Bishop of Colchester who was in the Chair thought that there were two causes for the break-down of moral authority; one was the decline of family life, the other the growth of scepticism from within. This was endorsed by the Headmaster of an approved school who said that he had never yet met a criminal who came from a happy home!

But here agreement ended. When it came to finding a solution there were "as many opinions as there were men." Some thought that what was wanted was better leadership, both religious and secular. Others that far too much was left for the young to decide themselves. One educational expert went so far as to suggest that moral teaching,

like scientific, should be concrete. "The principle of a rule of life must be accepted and followed."

It was not to be expected that such a meeting could arrive at any unanimous conclusion on so controversial a subject. Nevertheless its promoters are to be congratulated on bringing together representatives of many influential organisations, religious, social and educational, whose combined experience shed considerable light on the problem. By no means the least valuable contributions came from "a young couple with children," and some Sixth Form boys and girls. It is to be hoped that a similar assembly may, at some future date, continue the discussion from where it was left off.

### ● Religion and race

"South Africa, the land of our birth, is fighting tooth and nail against fellowship of any kind between the Christians of different racial groups," said the Rev. A. L. MnCube, President of the Inter-denominational African Ministers Federation of South Africa at a recent conference of the Federation. "Unity," he continued, "will never be achieved by creating a Church on the foundation of division and hatred."

A similar judgment was expressed in a resolution unanimously adopted at the recent meeting of the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church of the Province of South Africa. "The effect of much recent legislation is likely to be the rigid division of the population into social classes with unequal rights, privileges and opportunities and the relegation of the non-Europeans to a position of permanent inferiority, and for this, condemns this legislation as inconsistent with the respect for human personality that should be characteristic of a Christian society."

Still more recently, on March 26th to be precise, the Archbishop of Capetown described the South African Government's Bill to put Cape coloured voters on a separate electoral roll as "a breach of faith." Writing in his monthly letter to the magazine of the Capetown Diocese, the Archbishop went on to say that "a way is now being found to upset what was certainly regarded at the time of the union as unalterably fixed. Neither a man nor a Government has any moral right to break a promise because it is inconvenient to keep it."

We publish these statements without further comment than merely to say with what gratitude we welcome them, both for their own inherent value in relation to the immediate situation to which they refer, and as further evidence of the determination of religious leaders to see that fundamental religious principles are brought to bear in practical political issues.

### ● Der Grosse Auftrag

Children leaving school in Hamburg are presented by the town's school officials with a special book, and last Easter the book chosen was *Der Grosse Auftrag*.

A brief Foreword explains the title as follows: "Your task will be to overcome the consequences of war with all your strength and with untiring diligence and also to follow a new path in your political life and to build a peaceful world in which a new and better way of living together in friendliness will be assured to the nations of the world."

The horror, destruction and hatred of war are set in contrast against the achievements of those who have loved and worked for humanity such as Albert Schweitzer, Nansen and others, and there are many quotations from writers and thinkers, both past and present, emphasising the utter waste and futility of war, the danger of extreme nationalism and the need to recognise the solidarity of the human race.

In recent months we have heard much from Western Germany that has caused grave concern—evidence of still strong antisemitism, and of the resurgence of the Neo-Nazi Social Reich Party in the recent Lower Saxony elections. It would perhaps be unrealistic to expect that Nazism would not show itself in the difficulties of the present situation in which Western Germany, no less than other countries of Europe, finds itself. The Nazi propaganda was too thorough and went on too long for it to be otherwise. But against that, it is encouraging to have news also of the growing strength of groups similar to our own Council of Christians and Jews in many German cities, and to know that a real effort is being made in German schools to implant in the new generation sound democratic principles. This book given to Hamburg's schoolchildren should be a contribution to that effort.

## About Ourselves

● A group of Christians, led by the Mayor and Mayoress of Hampstead, visited the Hampstead Synagogue, Dennington Park Road, N.W.6 on the 11th April. They were conducted round the Synagogue by the minister, the Rev. I. Levy, S.C.F., who explained the Synagogue structure, the form of service and the method of administration.

The visitors were shown the contents of the Ark and one of the scrolls was displayed so that its script and form could be observed. Synagogue prayer

books and copies of the Pentateuch as well as a variety of religious appurtenances were on view. Special interest was shown in the silver spice box, the Shofar (Ram's horn) and the ornaments of the scrolls.

Keen interest was shown in the Children's Synagogue which is a miniature reproduction of the larger building. This is the only building of its kind in the country and is used mainly for children's services. The Synagogue hall and classrooms were also visited.

Opportunity was taken by the visitors to ask the minister numerous questions on the ritual of the Jewish service, the function of the lay leaders of the congregation and the duties of the Jewish clergy. The visit proved of great educational value and it is proposed to organise similar visits for local Church groups and societies.

The visit was arranged by the Hampstead branch of the Council of Christians and Jews.

● The Hampstead Council of Christians and Jews is now planning a films evening on Thursday, June 21st. It is to have two films—"Boundary Lines," and "Picture in Your Mind," with discussion to follow. These films are intriguing and provocative, being an attempt to apply a new type of film technique to the creation of public opinion. All who can attend the evening are assured of a stimulating time.

● A Conference for teachers, on "Education in Human Understanding," is to be held on Saturday, June 16th, at University College, London, under the leadership of Professor J. A. Lauwerys. The conference is to be arranged by the Council of Christians and Jews' Education Commission, and those taking part include representatives from the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, the Council for Education in World Citizenship, the Council of Citizens of East London, and the New Education Fellowship.

● A fourth week-end holiday conference for Christian and Jewish girls is being planned at Leatherhead from June 29th to July 1st. Again there will be ten or twelve members of the Y.W.C.A. and a similar number of girls from the Association for Jewish Youth. It is hoped to take further the discussion at the last conference, when the challenge to religion found in some of the modern "isms" was considered.

● The London Society of Jews and Christians is to hold its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, June 19th at 6.30 p.m., at St. John's Church, Southwark (the "Festival Church.") Following the business meeting, there will be at 8.0 p.m. a public meeting,

with the Dean of St. Paul's and Rabbi Dr. A. Altmann as speakers on the subject "Religious Understanding between Christian and Jew."

The London Society of Jews and Christians is planning to hold a further series of lectures during the 1951-52 season on the general theme of Christian and Jewish thought on the nature of man, and his functions and activities in the modern world.

● On May 15th the Hull Council of Christians and Jews arranged an American Tea in the Guildhall, to raise funds. Nearly 200 ladies attended the function, representing many voluntary societies, both Jewish and Christian, in the City. The function was opened by the Sheriff's Lady (Mrs. F. L. Bailey) and the guest speaker was Mr. Hallam Tennyson, the secretary of the Council of Citizens of East London, who spoke about the work of the Council of Christians and Jews. Canon Foster, Joint-Chairman of the Hull branch, who took the chair, described the formation of a Council of Christians and Jews in Hull as the most important piece of Christian work that he had witnessed during his fifteen years residence in the City.

In the evening, under the auspices of the Jewish Representative Council, Mr. Hallam Tennyson gave an address on "Education for Co-operation."

● In Manchester on April 23rd, Professor T. W. Manson, Moderator of the Manchester Free Church Federal Council, addressed the Annual General Meeting of the Manchester Council of Christians and Jews. Professor Manson took as his theme the common ground between Christian and Jew. The Communal Rabbi, Dr. A. Altmann, presided over the meeting. The Dean of Manchester, the Rt. Rev. John L. Wilson, C.M.G., was re-elected executive chairman for the coming year.

● The Council of Citizens of East London has produced an exhibition covering the story of East London peoples from the Middle Ages to the present day, which, says the *East End News* "is likely to sow the seeds of civilised sanity in the mind of many an East End child." Mounted on folding boards, and with models made in local clubs and schools, the exhibition

is to be taken to different schools in East London, and by the official opening day it had already been fully booked by nearly thirty schools for showing during the Festival of Britain period.

Mr. R. McKinnon Wood, Chairman of the L.C.C. education committee, declared the exhibition open at a ceremony in Toynbee Hall, and said it would give children a sympathetic understanding of the various peoples to be found with various religions and backgrounds in the East End.

The L.C.C. has undertaken to do the moving of the exhibition from school to school.

● As we go to press the winter's series of "Trio Team" meetings is drawing to a close. During the past nine months we have been able to send Trios, each including an Anglican or Free Church, a Roman Catholic, and a Jewish speaker, to a great many youth groups, Church fellowship meetings, discussion groups, and specially arranged meetings—from the small intimate group of 12 or 15 members, to the public meeting with well over 200 in the audience.

As in the previous two years when we have arranged these Trios, there has been a wide variety in the subjects chosen, and our speakers have been called upon to discuss questions ranging from euthanasia to the purpose of education. The most popular subjects, however, have been on questions of religion—"What is the use of religion?" being the most called-for title from both Church and secular groups.

Undoubtedly Trio Team discussions are of wide interest, and the unusual approach, together with the degree of audience participation which they invariably produce, may well leave more lasting impressions than many formal lectures.

We now look forward to another full programme of Trio Team meetings during 1951-52. Requests for Trios are already coming in, and we hope to reach many groups that we have not previously visited. We should welcome offers of help from people willing to take part as speakers. Those already participating in the Trios have, without exception, greatly enjoyed their experiences; we are most grateful to them,

and we look forward to their continued help. But if we are to meet all the requests that we may expect, many additional speakers, of all denominations, will be needed during the coming year. Please write to Mr. Wallace Bell, at 162A, Strand, if you are able to help.

● Readers of *Common Ground* will be interested to know that an exhibition of books on "The Jewish Way of Life" is to be held from July 8th to August 13th, at University College, London. This is one of the book exhibitions arranged during the Festival of Britain in association with the National Book League. In addition to books on Judaism by both Jewish and non-Jewish writers, and books illustrating the contribution of British Jews in all fields of literature, there will be a series of special lectures.

● **Basle Conference. May 19th-21st, 1951.**

There could be no more delightful setting for a conference than the room, lent on this occasion by the Roman Catholic authorities in their convent school, by the side of the fast-flowing Rhine and opposite the Minster, surely one of the most beautiful churches in Europe. Here were collected representatives of eight different European nations to report on the relations between the Christian and Jewish communities in their respective countries and to discuss what possibilities there were of co-ordination in the work which the various Councils of Christians and Jews were carrying out independently.

The Conference, for which the Swiss Council had made all the arrangements, devoted itself largely to the pooling of information. The most interesting reports came, as might be expected, from Germany, Austria and N. Africa whose group tensions gave most cause for anxiety. But the high light was reached on Saturday night when an open meeting of about 250 people listened to eloquent appeals for a better understanding between Christians and Jews delivered by prominent Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish speakers. Such a conference more than fulfilled the hopes of its promoters. Let the goodwill engendered flow on like the mighty stream whose rushing waters were the perpetual background to its deliberations!

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

**Rev. Isaac Levy, B.A.**, Senior Minister of the Hampstead Synagogue, is also Senior Jewish Chaplain to H.M. Forces.

**Rev. Dewi Morgan**, who has worked for some years in parishes in South Wales, is now Press Officer of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, with an especial responsibility for the 250th birthday celebrations.

**Douglas L. W. Schofield**, who is Warden of the Stamford Hill Associated Clubs, is also Chairman of numerous youth committees including the Boys' Division of the Association for Jewish Youth and is Hon. Secretary of the Stepney Jewish Lads' Club.

**Rev. W. W. Simpson** is General Secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews. He has just returned from a Conference on the Middle East Refugee Problem convened by the World Council of Churches in conjunction with the International Missionary Council.

**The Hon. Mr. Justice Vaisey** is Judge of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice. He has held numerous honorary offices in different Dioceses of the Church of England.

*(Signed articles express the views of the Contributors which are not necessarily those of the Council of Christians and Jews).*

## Book Notes

### Jesus in His Own Words

*Compiled by  
Harold Roper.  
(Longmans, 12/6d.)*

"Whether one believes in Jesus Christ or not, he is clearly someone to know. To say the least of it, no single individual has more profoundly affected the course of human thought and history."

This is a passage from the compiler's introduction and it explains the main purpose for which the book is written. It is to furnish both Christian and non-Christian readers with the material for forming a judgment on the teachings of Jesus by a reproduction of his recorded utterances in a concise and continuous form. The compiler has worked on the chronological principle and his excellent commentary, based on profound knowledge as well as intelligent surmise, fills in the gaps between the recorded events of Jesus' career and enables the reader to get a total picture of his life and personality.

In such a book there is naturally no place for higher criticism or discussion on controversial questions of authenticity. The text of the Gospel is taken as it stands, the Johannine account being given equal validity with the Synoptic. Where there are two versions of the same incident, one is given in brackets. Thus continuity

has been successfully preserved and the scholar as well as the general reader will be profoundly grateful for the opportunity provided for studying the life of Jesus in a single narrative which omits nothing of the splendour of his original spoken thought.

### Communism and Christian Faith

*By H. Ingli James.  
(Carey Kingsgate Press, 6s. 0d.)*

The issue that for most people today overshadows all others is the issue of power between the U.S.S.R. and the Western democracies. It is a commonplace to say that the underlying issue is a conflict of ideologies, but our understanding of those ideologies is all too slight. Ingli James does us a service by filling some at least of the gaps in our knowledge.

He does not underestimate the power and appeal of communism. Indeed he attributes to it the characteristics of a "faith"—though not perhaps a faith that can move mountains. And if we are to understand a faith, we must examine its basic principles; so the author takes us back to Karl Marx and his teachings. Indeed it is with Marxism that Mr. James is primarily concerned—Marxism as a dogma that took unto itself earlier communist ideas, and that remains as a philosophical justification for the political



expedients of a regime that is communist in name more than in reality. And Marxism he shows to be a self-contradiction: materialist, denying the influence, or even the existence, of ultimate causes other than physical, and, of them, primarily economic; and at the same time proclaiming a predestined process of history that man can accelerate or retard, but cannot in any way fundamentally change.

How strong an argument can be built up from a fallacy—provided we overlook the fallacy! How powerful a social philosophy can be developed from an original contradiction! Marxist materialism denies the existence of spiritual forces and values in the universe, and defines morality not by relation to standards of right or wrong outside the material and physical, but as a product of economic circumstances. Marxist determinism shows history as an inevitable process in which we have the opportunity and the privilege to share. Join these two ideas together, and we have a doctrine that proclaims that "right" consists of doing anything and everything to hasten that predetermined historical process, and "wrong" is anything that retards it.

Other conceptions of right and wrong, if they conflict with what the Marxist would do, are merely illusory, and must not be regarded. Now add the acceptance of an authority that decides what, in any given circumstances, is the action that will hasten the historical process, and we have communism as we know it today—ruthless, unscrupulous, changing its policy at the dictates of expediency, and yet capable of arousing fanatical devotion among its followers by assuring them that they are privileged to serve in the evolution of history, and giving them a new conscience that prevents any doubts about the morality of what they are called upon to do.

Against this, Mr. James upholds the Christian faith as the only force that can meet the challenge of communism. A Jewish author might well have advanced the claims of Judaism, and Jewish readers will endorse the answers which Mr. James gives as he answers the communist point by point. But this is, perhaps, the less valuable part of the book, whose chief virtue is that it helps us to an understanding of what all too many of us know all too little.

# Willsons

\* FASHION  
SHOPS

\* all over  
the country.



BIRMINGHAM	..	74 HIGH ST
CARDIFF	..	51 QUEEN ST
LEEDS	..	72 BOAR LANE
LEICESTER	..	10 GRANBY ST
NEWCASTLE		
		71 NORTHUMBERLAND ST
READING	..	80 BROAD ST
SWANSEA	..	219 OXFORD ST
etc.		etc.

\* write to Marble Arch House  
46-50 Edgware Road, W. 2  
for the address of your  
nearest shop



Those who smoke  
Craven 'A' seldom care  
for other cigarettes



